Increase in tobacco cultivation in Gujarat

1052. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the acreage under cultivation of Virginia tobacco is increasing in some States like Gujarat;

(b) whether Tobacco Board is monitoring such increase in acreage;

(c) whether any effort has been made to ensure that the existing growers of Andhra Pradesh do not suffer; and

(d) what steps Tobacco Board have taken to protect the interest of tobacco growers from Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Virginia tobacco is mainly cultivated in die states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Orissa.

(b) By virtue of regulating the production of Virginia tabacco the Tobacco Board monitors any increase in acreage.

(c) and (d) The Tobaco Board protects the interests of farmers of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco of all states including Andhra Pradesh. Some of the steps taken in this regard include:

(i) Fixing a crop size based on demand and authorising the crop size by registering farmers and area under cultivation of FCV.

(ii) Arranging supply of inputs like fertilizers and coal to the needy farmers.

(iii) Assisting farmers in obtaining crop loans & short term loans from the banks.

(iv) Analysing soil and water samples to test the suitability of lands/ water for growing tabacco and recommending fertilizers based on the availability of Nitrogen, Phosphorus & Potassium in the soil.

(v) Extending help in insuring tobacco curing barns with the Insurance Companies operating in the tobacco growing areas.

(vi) Arranging marketing of tabacco through auction sales at the auction platforms established by the Board in order to ensure correct weighment, and prompt payments.